

HOUSE RESOLUTION 294
By Williams (Unio)

A RESOLUTION to recognize the Hancock County High School medical clinic and honor its organizers and staff for their exemplary efforts.

WHEREAS, research has proven that children who live in poverty are more likely to have health, social and emotional problems; these problems greatly decrease a child's ability to learn and live a successful life; and

WHEREAS, four years ago, one half of the children in Hancock County lived below the poverty line; most were at high risk for tobacco use, alcohol abuse and unplanned pregnancies and most did not have access to health care services; and

WHEREAS, the 1992 need-assessment survey revealing the desperate state of Hancock County's youth worried many in Upper East Tennessee and prompted action by the concerned East Tennessee State University College of Nursing faculty; and

WHEREAS, abiding by their mission to "improve the health of communities" and "target the areas of need", ETSU's Nursing faculty collaborated to create a school-based clinic in Hancock County that would provide primary care for these at-risk teens; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sonda Oppewal, assistant professor of community health nursing, drafted a three-year proposal that yielded the clinic a quarter of a million dollars in federal funding; with the funding in place, staffers were able to open the doors of the clinic, which was housed in a mobile home beside the high school, in August of 1995; and

WHEREAS, since the clinic's opening, eighty-seven percent of Hancock County High School's students have registered for services and seventy-seven percent have sought treatment; and

WHEREAS, in a county where only one full-time physician practiced medicine when the local hospital closed in 1992, accessibility is the school-based clinic's most significant contribution to health care; and

WHEREAS, having the clinic on-site at the high school also helps to reduce absenteeism by making the services so readily available that treatment can be sought in time to reduce the severity of the problem; and

WHEREAS, recent risk-factor surveys already indicate improvements in certain areas because of the clinic's presence and the clinic's ability to reach teens with accurate health maintenance information; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that as elected representatives we should honor the clinic, its organizers and its staff, particularly those from ETSU's College of Nursing, for their exemplary efforts to improve the health and well-being of Hancock County teens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we hereby honor and commend the Hancock County school-based clinic, its organizers and staff for their meritorious service to Hancock County and our state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.